April 25, 1967 G. R. STUTZMAN 3,316,459

HERMETICALLY SEALED THIN FILM MODULE

Original Filed Nov. 7, 1966 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

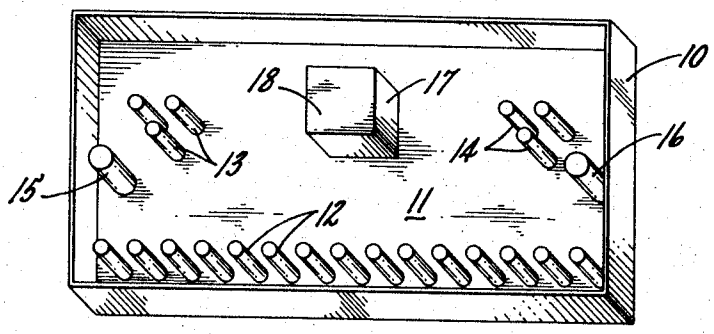


Fig. 1.

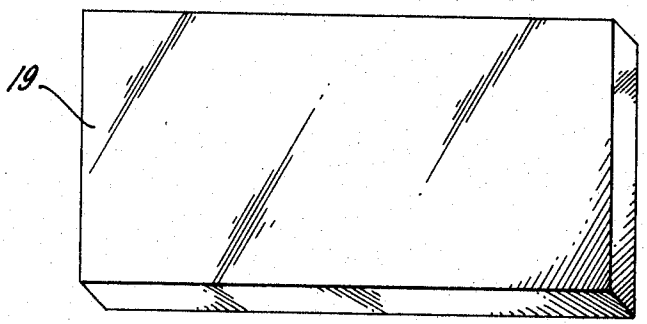


Fig. 2.

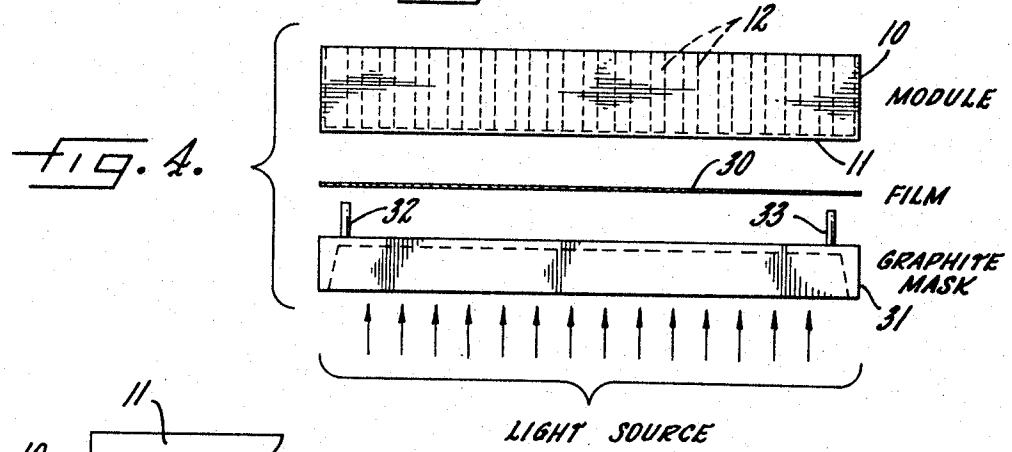


Fig. 4.

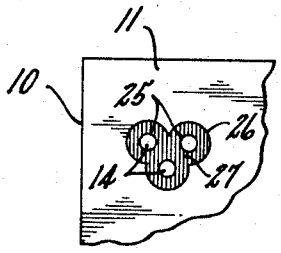


Fig. 3.

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HERMETICALLY SEALED THIN FILM MODULE

Original Filed Nov. 7, 1966 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

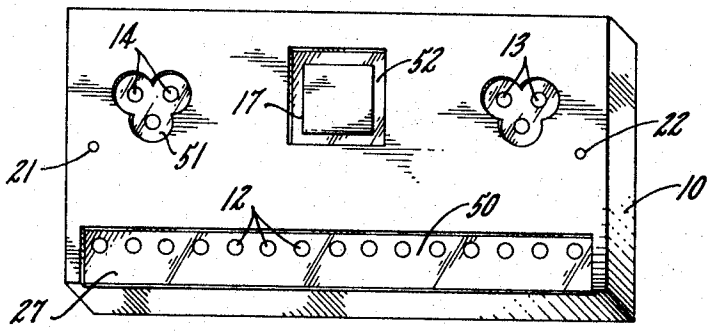


Fig. 5.

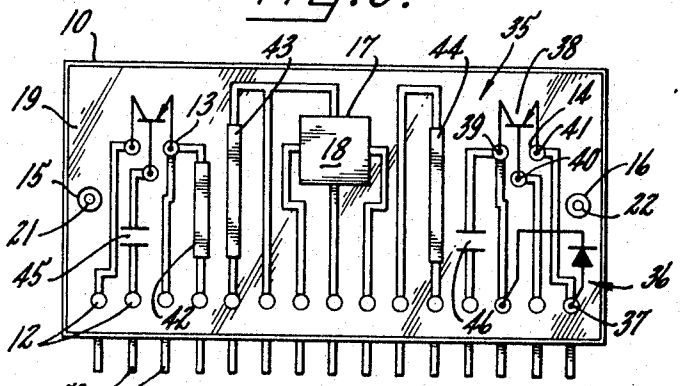


Fig. 6.

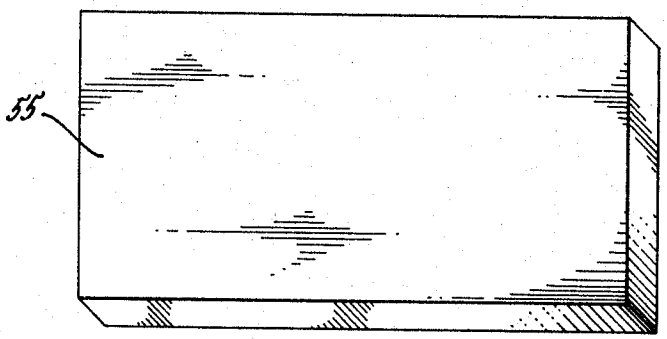


Fig. 7.

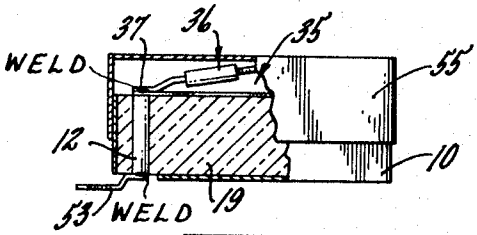


Fig. 8.

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HERMETICALLY SEALED THIN FILM MODULE

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Filed May 6, 1965, Ser. No. 453,848
5 Claims. (Cl. 317—101)

The invention described herein may be manufactured and used by or for the Government of the United States of America for governmental purposes without the payment of any royalties thereon or therefor.

This invention relates to thin film modules and more particularly to a moisture and air proof hermetically sealed module, which module has terminal pins to which the internal thin film circuit and an external etched circuit makes molecular contact, and to which discrete elements are welded. The module hermetically seals in a helium gas which readily conducts heat generated by the thin film circuit to the cover providing a self-contained heat sink. The method of producing this module is more particularly shown and described in a divisional application of the same inventor bearing Ser. No. 600,331, filed Nov. 7, 1966.

The production of thin film modules for thin film multilayer circuitry, as used in radar or the like, is well-known. These modules have been produced with extended connector leads in parallel relation forming a multiple connector to adapt them for replacement plugging into multilayer circuitry. As circuit design for these modules increase in complexity requiring more crossovers from one module to another, the failure rate of these modules increase due to insulation breakdown. This insulation failure has been traced to the dielectric film or material, such as silicon monoxide film or other plastic means, between the thin film circuit layers. Conformal coatings, such as silicones and epoxys or the like, have been used to encapsulate or seal the thin film circuits to form a barrier against moisture absorption. However, it has been found that this dielectric material acts as a sponge soaking up the moisture from the ambient air forcing its way through the junction of the conformal coating and multiple connector electrical leads to the exterior by capillary action. An inportant factor of these plastic encapsulated modules is the extreme forces of capillary action of the moisture which destroys the junction of the plastic sealing compound on the electrical conductors coming through the plastic encapsulated means from the thin film circuit to the outside termination. While the condition of moisture could be corrected by hermetically sealing the entire assembly of multilayer circuitry, it would interfer with and actually prevent the interchangeability of individual plug-in modules. Accordingly, it is necessary to seal each thin film module independent of the others.

Another disadvantage of the plastic encapsulated thin film module is the use of chromium (Cr) and copper (Cu) providing the thin film circuit conductors which do not lend themselves to the solder bonding of discrete elements thereto, such as microminiature transistors and diodes. Solder bonding of these discrete elements to Cr, Cu thin film circuitry often loosens the thin film circuitry from the glass substrate. Since Cu does not readily adhere to the glass substrate by vacuum deposition, the circuit must first have Cr deposited on the glass substrate with the Cu deposit on top of the Cr.

Another disadvantage to the film deposition of Cr, Cu on a glass substrate is that resistance welding of leads or of discrete elements to the thin film terminations or circuitry is not possible due to the spot heating of the glass substrate surface. A chip of glass will leave the

substrate at the point of the welder electrode contact which severs the film from the circuit termination.

A still further disadvantage of the plastic encapsulated thin film circuitry is that the thin glass substrate requires that it be cemented to a heat sink. The cement sets up causing severe strains in the glass substrate which has a tendency to crack the glass during thermal changes or vibration.

In the present invention a glass substrate is melted around a matrix of metal pins within a metal cup or can such that the glass and the metal are chemically attached by a bond of the glass oxide to the metal oxide which prevents a capillary from forming and which acts as a barrier against moisture. The forces of capillary action are less than the forces of chemical bonding and therefore the moisture seal is not destroyed. The metal cup or can and terminal pins, which include registration pins and capacitor terminal block, and the glass substrate are chosen to be of the same coefficient of thermal expansion so that perfect glass-to-metal seals are established at each glass-to-metal joint without physical stress after cooling. For an example, the metal cup or can and the metal registration and terminal pins and capacitor pads may be of a material known by their trade names as Kovar or Rodar and the glass substrate may be of a Corning number 7052 or number 7059 having like coefficients of thermal expansion, although other metals or glass substrates may be used where their coefficients of thermal expansion are compatible. It also may be envisioned that vitreous materials other than glass or even thermosetting plastic material may be used where its coefficient of thermal expansion is the same as the metal parts. The glass substrate may be drilled to match the registration and terminal pins and capacitor block arrangement in the metal cup and heated in the cup member to fuse the glass and metal, or the glass substrate may be a pure blank and brought to a molten temperature and pressed into the cup to flow around the terminal pins and capacitor pads to form the glass-to-metal seal. The exposed face of the glass substrate is them optically lapped or polished to expose one end of each of the terminal pins and capacitor pads on which thin film circuitry is vacuum deposited. Since the thin film circuitry will terminate at the several terminal pins, aluminum (Al) can be vacuum deposited directly onto the glass substrate overlaying the terminal pins making a molecular bond to the glass and the terminal pins. Discrete elements, such as transistors and diodes, may be welded to the terminations of the thin film Al circuitry over the terminal pins since this welding is now to a substantial mass of metal and not to the thin film alone. This thin film module is covered by a metal cover of the same metal as the cup in an atmosphere of helium (He) gas and soldered, welded, or otherwise metallically fused to the metal cup to form a thin film circuit module. The direct contact of the glass to the metal cup and the thermal conductivity of the helium gas provide an excellent heat sink for the thin film circuitry. It is accordingly, a general object of this invention to produce a thin film electrical circuit module that is hermetically sealed against moisture absorption, that has terminals to which thin film circuitry and discrete circuit components can be welded, and that provides a self-contained heat sink for the thin film circuit.

These and other objects and the attendant advantages, features, and uses will become more apparent to those skilled in the art as the description proceeds when considered along with the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 illustrates an isometric view of a metallic cup with metallic terminal pins and a capacitor block

fixed to the bottom thereof by welding and constituting a form for a glass substrate;

FIGURE 2 illustrates an isometric view of a glass substrate blank;

FIGURE 3 illustrates a cutaway portion of the bottom corner of the cup member overlaying terminal pins with a photographic resist insulation band thereon;

FIGURE 4 illustrates an exploded view of the module, a film, and a graphite mask exposing photographic resist material on the module to light;

FIGURE 5 illustrates the bottom view of the metallic cup of FIGURE 1 after the glass substrate of FIGURE 2 has been molded therein and the metal has been etched away;

FIGURE 6 is a top view of FIGURE 5 with a thin film circuit illustrated thereon and terminal connectors or leads attached thereto;

FIGURE 7 illustrates an isometric view of the metal cover; and

FIGURE 8 illustrates an end elevational view of the thin film module with a corner portion broken away to show a portion of the glass substrate witb a terminal pin therein having a terminal lead and a discrete element on the thin film circuit welded thereto.

Referring more particularly to FIGURE 1, a rectangular metal cup member **10** is pre-formed from sheet material by a press, such as a hydroform or hydraulic press. A rod of the same metal material as the cup member **10** is cut or sheared into lengths equal to the internal depth dimension of the cup member **10**. A row of these terminal pins **12** are welded to the bottom or floor **11** of the cup member **10** in equal spaced relation extending upwardly in the cup, as illustrated in FIGURE 1. Other terminal pins such as **13** and **14** may be placed and welded to the bottom **11** of the cup member **10** in accordance with desired circuit requirements but herein illustrated, for the purpose of an example, as being in two groups near opposite ends of the cup member **10**. Enlarged registration pins **15** and **16** are welded to the cup bottom **11** at opposite ends of cup member **10**. A capacitor pad or block **17**, of the same metal as the terminal pins **12**, registration pins **15**, **16**, and cup member **10** is welded to the bottom **11** of the cup member **10** and extends upwardly so that the upper face **18** will be in the same plane as the upper edge or rim of the cup member **10**, the upper ends of the terminal pins **12**, **13**, and **14**, and the tops of registration pins **15**, **16**.

Referring to FIGURES 1 and 2, FIGURE 2 illustrates a pre-formed glass substrate **19** which may be drilled to have holes corresponding in a place and diameter with the pins **12** through **16**, and an opening corresponding to the size of the capacitor block **17** in FIGURE 1 to facilitate the bonding of the glass to the metal by heat treatment, although this drilling may be eliminated, where desired. Prior to the fusing of the glass to the metal, the metal cup **10** with its terminal pins, registration pins, and capacitor blocks **12** through **17** must have a thin defused skin of iron (Fe) and Cr on the sealing surface to facilitate wetting of glass to a controlled oxide. The cup **10** and its integral parts are then annealed in wet hydrogen at 1800° F. If the glass blank **19**, as shown in FIGURE 2, is placed over the cup member **10** and weighted on top with a graphite block, placed in a vacuum furnace, and brought up to a temperature at which the glass becomes slightly molten, the glass blank **19** will be pressed into the cup member **10** and the terminal pins **12**, **13**, **14**, registration pins **15**, **16**, and the capacitor block **17** will be forced through the glass blank and, upon cooling, the glass will seal to the metal by a chemical bond. If the glass blank **19** is drilled prior to the glass-to-metal seal in the cup **10**, there is some possibility of air bubbles forming between the glass and metal and extreme care must be used in the operation of pressing the glass substrate into the cup member **10** under heated conditions to eliminate these air bubbles. The method of pressing the undrilled glass blank **19**, such as shown in FIGURE 2, into the cup member **10** in a molten state is preferred since the probability of getting air bubbles at the juncture of the glass and metal is quite remote.

Referring more particularly to FIGURE 3 after the glass-to-metal seal has been accomplished and the module has been annealed, a registration hole is drilled at opposite ends of the module concentrically through each registration pin **15**, **16** and the cup **10**, such as **21** and **22** (shown in FIGURE 6), for the purpose of registration with dowel pins in a vacuum deposition holder, soon to be more fully described.

Two graphite masks are made in accordance with the process shown and described in my patent application entitled Pattern Mask and Method for Making Same, Ser. No. 308,606, filed Sept. 12, 1963. One mask is cut to position openings precisely over the terminal ends **12**, **13** and **14** and the capacitor block **17** through the bottom **11** while the other graphite mask is cut to provide an insulation band around each terminal and block. For example, referring to the fractional view of FIGURE 3. the first graphite mask will have cut openings **25** exactly overlaying terminal pins **14**, if projected through the bottom **11**. The second graphite mask will have cut openings **26** to provide an insulation band **27** around each terminal pin **14**. A photographic film is exposed through the first graphite mask of the terminal pins to provide a positive photographic film of the terminal pins **12–14** and capacitor block **17**. The glass and metal cup module is then covered with a photographic resist material in a dark room.

Referring more particularly to FIGURE 4, the exposed positive photographic film, herein designated by the reference character **30**, is sandwiched between the module bottom **11** and the second graphite mask having the insulation openings **26** therein and designated by the reference character **31**. FIGURE 4 illustrates this sandwiched assembly in an exploded view with dowel pins **32** and **33** positioned to pass through registration holes in the film and the registration holes **21** and **22** in the glass and metal cup module to maintain proper registry. A light source exposes the photographic resist material in the insulation band **27** around the terminal pins **12–14** and capacitor block **17**. The module is removed from this assembly in FIGURE 4 and the photographic resist removed from all the module except the insulation bands **27**. Exposing the photographic resist to light causes the insulation bands **27** to resist being washed away and consequently the insulation bands **27** of photographic resist material remain on the bottom **11** of the metal cup **10**. The module is then gold plated directly on the exposed metal surface, thereby missing the insulation bands **27**. The photographic resist material is then removed from the insulation bands **27** by any well known means and the metal cup bottom **11** is etched away with acid, as shown in FIGURE 5. The gold plating resists acid etch and consequently only the insulation bands **27** are affected. The insulation bands **27** in FIGURE 5 consist of the glass substrate **19**. The metal portion etched away around the terminal pins **12** is the insulation band **27** which extends to the side of the cup member **10** providing a multiple male connector for plug-in to a female connector in multilayer circuitry. The exposed glass substrate surface on the opposite side of that shown in FIGURE 5 is lapped and polished to an optical surface until the predetermined thickness dimension of the module is accomplished. This module is then placed in a holder (not shown) with registration pins passed through the open registration holes **21** and **22** and a graphite mask (not shown) for the thin film circuitry is placed on the optically polished surface of the module. The graphite mask is of the type more fully shown and described in my above-mentioned patent application which more fully describes the process for the evaporation deposition of

conductors. This assembly for thin film deposition is cleaned by an ultrasonic cleaner and dried by a desiccator dryer and then passed through the sequence of thin film evaporation deposition for placing a circuit of conductive metal, preferably Al, thereon, such as the circuitry **35** shown in FIGURE 6. The capacitor block **17** serves to place alternate layers of silicon monoxide and metal, such as Al, on the face **18** to provide capacitor plates.

Referring more particularly to FIGURES 6 and 8, discrete microminiature elements are connected into the thin film circuitry by welding the leads, such as from a diode **36**, to the thin film circuitry directly over a terminal pin **12** at the point **37**. In like manner a microminiature transistor, such as **38**, is shown having its terminals connected to the thin film circuitry at the terminations of the terminal pins **14** at points **39**, **40**, and **41**. The thin film circuitry **35** may include thin film resistance elements, as illustrated by **42**, **43**, and **44**, and also thin film capacitors as illustrated by **45** and **46**. The resistor elements consist of a thin film cermet layer defined in length by a silicon monoxide layer and terminated by thin film Al conductors which make interametallic junction with the terminal pins. The thin film conductors of circuit **35** is preferably Al to which the several discrete elements **36** and **38** may be readily welded at terminal pins by spot resistance welding means so that the leads of the discrete elements and the termination of the thin film conductors are permanently fixed and not subject to lift-off.

Referring again to FIGURE 5 and to FIGURE 8, by etching away a portion of the metal bottom **11** of the cup **10** from these terminals exposing the bottom side of the glass substrate as at **50**, **51**, and **52**, the terminal pins and capacitor block are electrically insulated from the cup member **10**. To each of the terminal pins **12** in a row on the bottom side of the module shown in FIGURE 5 may be connected a terminal conductor or lead **53**, as shown in FIGURE 8, by resistance spot welding. The terminal leads **53** may be added where it is desirable to plug into a conventional female connector, although the module may be used as a multiple male connector, shown in FIGURE 5, as aforesaid. The terminal connectors or leads **53** from the terminal pins **12** extend outwardly in parallel past the cup member **10**, as shown in FIGURE 6, to provide the multiple connector for the module.

Referring more particularly to FIGURES 7 and 8, FIGURE 7 illustrates a cover **55** which is pressed out of sheet material by hydroform or hydraulic press equipment to provide an inverted cup-shaped cover to exactly telescope over the member **10**, as shown in FIGURE 8. The cover member **55** is dipped in a hot soldering dip around the peripheral edge or rim and the module and cover are then placed in a vacuum furnace. The heat is raised in the vacuum furnace to about 250° F. for drying and outgassing in vacuum. As soon as the module and cover members are free of moisture, the vacuum furnace chamber is filled with dry helium gas and then evacuated to flush the enclosure. The cover member **55** is placed over the module cup member **10**, as shown in FIGURE 8 after helium gas is again bled into the chamber at one atmosphere pressure and the temperature is raised to the melting point of the solder at which time the solder flows to fuse with both the cup member **10** and cover member **55** to provide a hermetic seal with the helium gas of one atmosphere trapped within the enclosure. This completed module can then be tested in a helium mass spectrometer leak detector to detect any leaks in the module.

The completed circuit module, as shown in FIGURE 8, readily adapts itself in the method of production to the use of a circuit layout, using computer prepared tape for automation, and standardized probe points for circuit testing. Pre-formed fixtures, for nesting and positioning the terminal pins and capacitor blocks within the cup **10** and for positioning the terminal leads **53** for welding to the ends of the terminal pins **12**, may be used in automating the assembly. The terminal pins **12**, **13**, and **14**, and the capacitor block **17** may be welded to the cup member **10**, using numerical control equipment that can be readily obtained from commercial sources. This will allow the circuit designer all the freedom he needs to customize the thin film modules. During the process of fabricating the module, a monitor could be provided for resistor deposition by probing the back side of resistor terminal pins during the deposition cycle on each individual substrate.

The completed thin film module, as shown in FIGURE 8, is hermetically sealed against any moisture entering the chamber enclosing the thin film circuit **35** since the glass substrate **19** is bonded chemically to the sides and bottom of the cup member **10** and to all terminal pins **12**, **13**, and **14**, and to block **17**. The bonding of the cover member **55** to the cup member **10** prevents moisture leakage into the chamber enclosing the thin film circuit **35**. All thin film Al circuitry **35**, as well as discrete elements such as **36**, **38**, are welded only at terminal pins **12**, **13** and **14**, and to block **17**, this welding being to a substantial mass of metal and not to the thin film circuitry itself. In like manner the terminal connectors or leads **53**, when used, are all welded to the terminal pins **12** eliminating all soldering of the thin film circuitry and thereby avoiding any peeling of the circuitry or breaking of the solder connections by heat or vibration. As shown more clearly in FIGURE 5, other lead connections may be welded to the terminal pins **13** and **14** to complete the thin film circuitry or for a separate circuit where these elements are not subject to moisture conditions. Likewise, these terminal pins **13** and **14** may be used for crossover junctions where necessary to interconnect other circuit layers or modules. If necessary, the bottom **11** of the cup member **10** may be etched as described above for etching the pin and block areas to provide an exposed printed circuit from the several terminal pins **12**, **13**, and **14**, and the capacitor block **17** where such circuitry is likewise not subject to moisture interference. The bottom face of capacitor block **17** may have a plurality of capacitor plates evaporated thereon in the same manner as the face **18**.

While many modifications may be made in the constructional details to accomplish the results of a completely moisture proof plug-in type thin film circuit module, it is to be understood that I desire to be limited in the scope of the article constructed only by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A hermetically sealed thin film electric circuit module comprising:

a metal cup with upstanding fixed terminal pins and capacitor blocks within the cup, said terminal pins and capacitor blocks being electrically insulated from said metal cup;

a vitreous substrate material of the same coefficient of thermal expansion as said metal cup within said cup and sealed to said cup, said terminal pins, and said capacitor blocks by vitreous-to-metal molecular seals with opposite ends of each terminal pin and the capacitor block exposed and with one face of said vitreous substrate on the open side of said metal cup being optically flat;

thin film deposited circuitry including thin film resistors and diodes on said optically flat surface of said vitreous substrate connecting one of the exposed ends of said terminal pins and capacitor blocks and discrete active elements resistance welded to said one ends of said terminal pins, the other ends of said terminal pins having means forming a multiple connector; and

a metal cover of the same coefficient of thermal expansion as said metal cup fixed to said cup by metallic fusion to said cup with an inert gas therein to hermeti-

cally seal said thin film circuitry in the gas environment within said cup and cover whereby a thin film plug-in type module is provided.

2. A hermetically sealed thin film electric circuit module as set forth in claim 1 wherein

said means forming a multiple connector is the exposure of said other ends of said terminal ends in the same plane as the vitreous substrate material surrounding same to allow a slidable fit within a companion connector.

3. A hermetically sealed thin film electric circuit module as set forth in claim 1 wherein

said means forming a multiple connector consists of a terminal lead welded to said other end of each terminal pin externally of said cup extending outwardly from said cup in parallel relation to allow a slidable fit within a companion connector.

4. A hermetically sealed thin film electric circuit module comprising:

a rectangular metal cup having an elongated opening and a plurality of other openings in the bottom thereof;

a glass substrate of the same coefficient of thermal expansion as said cup molded into said cup with a row of terminal pins in spaced relation over said elongated opening and other terminal pins and capacitor blocks over said other openings, all terminal pins and capacitor blocks being hermetically sealed in said glass substrate and electrically insulated from each other and from said cup by said glass substrate, and the exposed side of said glass substrate being optically flat in a plane exposing one end of each terminal pin and capacitor block;

thin film deposited circuitry including thin film resistors and capacitors on the exposed side of said glass substrate with circuit terminations overlaying said terminal pins and discrete transistors and diodes welded to said circuit terminations over the said terminal pins and capacitor blocks;

a terminal lead welded to the other end of each terminal pin in said row exposed through the elongated opening of said cup, said terminal leads extending outwardly and in parallel to provide a male multiple connector for said thin film circuitry; and

a metal cover of the same coefficient of thermal expansion as said cup welded to said cup with hermetically sealed in gas in the area between said cover and said exposed surface of said glass substrate whereby a thin film moisture resistant module is provided for plug-in use with said gas, cup, and cover providing a heat sink for the module.

5. A hermetically sealed thin film electric circuit module as set forth in claim 4 wherein

said gas within said module is helium at substantially atmospheric pressure.

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